

Pioneer Statuary Group Buffalo Head Drinking Fountain

Pioneer Statuary Group—Buffalo Head Drinking Fountain

In 1884, a committee appointed by Governor Buren R. Sherman chose architect Jacob Weidenmann of New York City to design plans for improving the State Capitol grounds. The plans were set aside while work on the Capitol continued. Six years later, the actual project began and it was completed in 1892.

The design for this grouping called for: "The Pioneer of the former territory, a group consisting of father and son guided by a friendly Indian in search of a home." The pioneer depicted was to be hardy, capable of overcoming the hardships of territorial days to make Iowa his home. A Connecticut artist, Karl Gerhardt, was contracted to do the piece for \$4,500.

Originally designed to be a lion's head, this bronze buffalo head was determined more appropriate to Iowa's prairie environment. The fountain was made for drinking—for horses as well as humans.

Alexander Doyle, designer of the Great Seal tablet, designed this fountain as well, for \$500.

